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## **Collaboration with International Non-Governmental Agencies for Community Surface Irrigation Development and Management - Experience and Future Scope**

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### **Executive Summary**

Agricultural Development Bank has collaborated with CARE/Nepal and SNV-Nepal in the implementation of its Community Surface Irrigation Program (CSIP).

Collaboration with CARE/Nepal was extensive and included capital subsidy supports along with free technical supports. With SNV-Nepal collaboration is limited to technical manpower supports in the form of Development Associates (DAs)

Both collaborations have their own usefulness and drawbacks; direct involvement of CARE/Nepal gave rise to identification of problems while SNV-Nepal's DAs had some status and appropriateness problems.

Scope exists for ADB/N's collaboration with INGOs, provided the INGO remains in the background and also with NNGO, provided it jointly implements the CSIPs.

### **Introduction**

Since its inception, the Agricultural Development Bank (ADB/N) has been extending credit supports for the development of irrigation facilities in the country in order to supplement the agricultural development programs in general. More specifically it has augmented the agricultural credit demands by encouraging the farmers to take up extensive and intensive agricultural production activities.

ADB/N has maintained this policy with enough flexibility so that all types of possible irrigation facilities could be developed. There is no bar on the basis of geographical location or the client being an individual or a group of persons. Even the budgetary funding allocations are not limited.

Similarly, the interest rate fixed on the irrigation loan is a bare minimum, of 18% and the HMGN also has provided subsidies of 40 to 75% of the capital cost. This is to assist willing farmers to develop potential schemes with their own resources.

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The Surface Irrigation is a sizable component of the irrigation development program of ADB/N. The policy of ADB/N is to harness potential sources of water to gravity-feed the production pockets or areas on both individual and community ownership, operation and maintenance basis.

The main features of ADB/N implemented CSIPs are low cost, locally suited designs, use of local materials, beneficiary participation from survey to construction to operation and maintenance, environmentally safe, credit supports by ADB/N, capital subsidy provision, free of cost technical support services and the beneficiaries' participation through labor contribution.

The advantage with ADB/N Community Surface Irrigation Development Program is that ADB/N supports not only with the financial assistance (in the form of credit) but also with free technical supports. Organizational supports as well as post-completion back-up programs also exist, specially in the SFDP areas.

## **Collaboration with CARE/Nepal**

### **Background**

ADB/N started the Community Surface Irrigation Program (CSIP) as a regular program on the basis of community participation from 1983/84 in collaboration with CARE/Nepal. ADB/N provided irrigation loans whereas CARE/Nepal extended material supports in the form of subsidy and the farmers contributed their labor and finance as equity participation. Thus, ADB/N extended credit up to 30% of the total project cost whereas CARE/Nepal provided grant supports up to 50% and the remaining 20% was mandatorily borne by the beneficiary farmers through their participation in the form of labor contribution. Both ADB/N and CARE/Nepal together provided the entire technical supports services free of cost from the identification phase of the projects to their surveying, designing, cost estimating and actual implementation phases. This collaboration was limited to the Small Farmers Development Project (SFDP) area only and it lasted for five years until 1988/89.

From 1989/90 onwards, this community surface irrigation program has been supported by His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMGN) through the provision of 60% of the total project cost as a capital subsidy and the program was extended to the areas outside of SFDPs as well. Of the remaining project cost, 30% was provided by ADB/N as a loan and the 10% equivalent borne through compulsory labor participation by the beneficiaries.

### **The Agreed Main Roles of ADB/N and CARE/Nepal**

#### **a) ADB/N**

- Selection of potential project sites.
- Selection of small farmer groups with established working relationships.
- Provision of project site overseers to be assigned to the individual project sites from survey, design, cost estimates to work implementation phases and bearing their costs involved.

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- Provision of services of Group Organizer to assist participating small farmer groups implement irrigation projects.
  - Provision of irrigation loans to the farmer groups of up to 50% of direct costs and production credit loans.
  - Ensuring the materials and equipment provided are used exclusively for the intended purposes.
  - Issuing completion certificate to CARE/Nepal .
  - Resolution of conflicts.
- b) CARE/Nepal
- Providing up to 50% of direct project cost---materials, equipment, transportation of materials, site labor, training and technical support and supervision.
  - Provision of two qualified field engineers to collaborate with ADB/N technical personnel from site selection to work supervision.
  - Provision of a field agriculturist to advise participating farmers on crop production.
  - Providing community management co-ordinator/expert for institutional development like Water Users' Associations.
  - Training of ADB/N technical personnel on survey to implementation aspects.

### **Work Executed**

- Construction of 14 new irrigation schemes and 19 rehabilitation/improvement schemes, thereby providing irrigation to 1824 ha (new) and 1364 ha (rehabilitation) of land in 13 districts.
- Carried out three training courses for the ADB/N junior technical staff.
- Carried out two training courses for the farmers.
- Not much was done in institutional development at the farmers levels.

### **Experiences**

- Most of the ADB/N and CARE irrigation schemes are operating with little trouble, technically as well as in a socially harmonious way.
- However, some large complicated projects which were constructed with set targets in view, failed due to technical capability.

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- Mechi Kulo, 388 ha (Bahundangi, Jhapa) - The side intake structure on the Mechi River has been washed away by river degradation irreparably.
  - Altai Khola kulo, 99 ha (Sijuwa, Morang)- Scouring damages at intake
  - Ratu Khola kulo, 70 ha (Tulsi, Dhanusha)-Upper reach of canal washed away by Ratu Khola
  - Rajaiya kulo, 25 ha (Jyamire, Makwanpur)-Failure of intake on Rapti river
- On-site visits by technical teams were frequent (made easy by CARE's own vehicular facilities).
  - ADB/N technical staff, almost all of whom were recruited with the initiation of the ADB/N and CARE joint program, gained limited knowledge and skill in design and work supervision but gained enough confidence in design and construction of low-cost but technically sound small-irrigation schemes.
  - But the irritants were:
    - The joint venture irrigation schemes got identified unduly much more as CARE schemes rather than joint schemes. (Perhaps due to field work supervision by CARE personnel, CARE's payment authority for subsidy works and use of CARE's vehicles during supervision trips to sites).
    - The junior technical staff of ADB/N got high expectations, and they became spoiled-there was a tendency to expect the same facilities as they had experienced during the joint venture period.

## **Collaboration with SNV-Nepal**

### **Background**

ADB/N collaborated with SNV-Nepal in the implementation of the Bank's CSIPs by way of the later providing its Development Associates (DAs).

The Bank had requested SNV-Nepal to provide the DAs with minimum qualification of B.Sc. Civil Engineering with specialization in Irrigation Engineer/Water Management to discharge the following tasks and responsibility:

- a) to undertake detailed feasibility studies of the Small Farmers Community Irrigation Schemes
- b) to provide technical guidance for the construction of irrigation systems to the community
- c) to train the local community to the undertake construction work to maintain the irrigation systems

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- d) to train ADB/N Overseers and Sub-overseers to undertake feasibility studies, construction and maintenance of the irrigation systems
  - e) to prepare a completion report of the system.

### **Work Executed by DAs**

- a) They were engaged most of the time in conducting feasibility studies, design, cost estimating and construction supervision of CSIPs with the very active cooperation and help from civil engineering technicians of ADB/N.
- b) They hardly managed to participate in training the local beneficiary communities on O&M of the CSIPs or even the junior civil engineering technicians of ADB/N. This was because of the limited scope for such activity in the ADB/N and also due to heavy workload in construction activities.

### **Experience**

ADB/N had accepted the manpower supports in order to ease its own limitation of capable manpower, but the Bank's experience with DAs is very mixed:

- a) The perceptions about the scope and extent of functions of DAs differed between SNV-Nepal and ADB/N. This caused some confusion as to the DAs functions, utilization and authority without accountability.
- b) There has been some difficulties arising out of the professional background of some DAs as against the actual requirements of ADB/N. Moreover, ADB/N was left without capable manpower once the DAs have completed their contract. The DAs were only able to gain experience but minimally help in improving the capability of the ADB/N staff.
- c) Repeated insistence for provision by ADB/N of counter-part civil engineers to DAs, despite the fact that ADB/N had precisely asked for DAs due to shortage of civil engineers in the Bank. This has been a bone of contention between ADB/N and SNV-Nepal.

These factors have affected the success level of SNV-Nepal and ADB/N cooperation in the CSIP.

### **Future Scope of Collaboration with INGO and NNGO**

Based on the experiences from the Bank's collaboration with CARE/Nepal and SNV-Nepal in CSIP implementation, future cooperation with INGOs and NNGOs should be along the following lines:

### **Collaboration with INGOs**

- a) Providing direct or indirect capital support in any or all of the following:
  - Provision of construction materials, in kind or cash for use in irrigation schemes.
  - Provision of engineering equipment and/or two wheel drive form of transport.
  - Provision of sponsorship for local technical/engineering manpower on contractual employment by ADB/N.
  - Provision of sponsorship for local experts/manpower through NNGOs for institutional development
    - community organization works at farmers level
    - irrigation system O&M works at farmers level
    - water utilization and production capacity development work at farmers' level

Skill and experience development training and exposure visits of ADB/N technical staff in-country and/or abroad
- b) Limiting the role of INGO to joint program planning and monitoring of progress and impacts while assigning the main responsibility of work implementation (survey to turn-key completion) to ADB/N and NNGOs joint teams.

### **Collaboration with NNGO**

- a) Joint implementation with financial sponsoring from INGO
- b) Training of farmers for institutional/capacity developments through mobile teams
- c) Post-implementation supports and counselling on
  - O&M of irrigation systems, and
  - provision of agricultural production packages